

The Five Domains of School Readiness

A child's readiness for school should be measured and addressed across five distinct but connected domains:

- **Physical Well-Being and Motor Development.**

- Children's physical development (e.g. growth patterns of height and weight)
- Health status (the ability to see and hear)
- Physical abilities (e.g. ability to move to get needs met, assisted or unassisted)
- Proper nutrition and rest have a strong impact on readiness to learn, providing children with the energy and mobility to explore their environment and increase their ability to concentrate.

Early identification of needs and provision of intervention services are critical for children with disabilities.

- **Social and Emotional Development.**

- Children's knowledge of their own feelings and those of others
- The ability to develop positive relationships
- An interest in and demonstration of interpersonal skills needed to maintain positive relationships with adults and peers
- The capability of engaging and cooperating within a group
- The ability to demonstrate the skills needed to get along with peers (e.g. managing conflicts in a positive way)

Highlights of this domain serve as a foundation for later school success and meaningful life experiences as an adult and consist of: developing and maintaining friendships, appreciating differences, solving conflicts, and functioning effectively in groups.

- **Approaches to Learning.**

- Curiosity
- Enjoyment of learning
- Confidence
- Creativity
- Attention to task
- Reflection
- Interests and attitudes

These are manifested in all domains and curriculum areas, including music, dramatic play, and art.

- **Language Development.**

- Expressive (e.g. expressive speech that is understood or use of a nonverbal system of communication)
- Understanding skills to effectively interact with others
- Early literacy skills are a part of language development (e.g. an awareness of print, an understanding that writing has a purpose).

Language development and early literacy skills are correlated to how effectively children can communicate their needs, interact socially with others, and describe events, thoughts, and feelings.

- **Cognition and General Knowledge.**

- Basic knowledge of concepts and the workings of the environment in which the child participates (e.g. knows his/her own name, understanding basic science concepts)
- Cognitive competencies like early mathematical skills (e.g. number sense, discriminating shapes and colors, simple patterns, size, location, and time)
- Basic problem-solving skills (e.g. acknowledging similarities and differences, identifying solutions, and increasing attention and focus to challenging tasks).

A child's innate sense of curiosity and the ability to acquire, organize, and use information in increasingly complex ways are indicative of how the child acquires new knowledge and learns about the impact he/she has on others and the environment.

Although these five domains are separate and distinct, there is constant overlap of skill acquisition in early childhood development. Skills in one domain are reinforced as skills are gained in another domain, (e.g. increase of communication skills builds confidence and positive self-image). Kindergarten teachers support all five domains of child development.

Children development occurs at varying rates, and as such we should not expect all children to reach a common "standard" of readiness. Children come from different cultures, with unique life experiences, and a range of ability levels. Therefore, it is anticipated that children may demonstrate competencies in individual ways and should be expected to show different patterns of development.

The concept of "readiness" includes much more than children's readiness to learn kindergarten standards. As defined by the National Education Goals Panel, the School Readiness Indicators Initiative (<http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/negp/reports/99rpt.pdf>), and others, "readiness" includes ready children, ready families, ready communities, ready early care and education, and ready schools. Readiness at every level is necessary so that all children will experience success.

It is the responsibility of schools to meet the needs of children as they enter school and to provide whatever services are needed to help each child reach his or her fullest potential.

Indiana has developed the Foundations to the Indiana Academic Standards for Young Children from Birth to Age 5. The Foundations are based on the latest national research and findings for all content areas and domains. By outlining specific skills and concepts and giving examples of instructional strategies, these foundations will support teachers, parents, and caregivers as they develop appropriate experiences for young children to help ensure success in kindergarten.

A copy of the Foundations can be viewed at:

http://www.doe.in.gov/primetime/docs/foundations/indiana_foundations.pdf